

**CHARLOTTE SELECTBOARD
MINUTES OF MEETING
TOWN HALL
JANUARY 19, 2016**

APPROVED

SELECTBOARD MEMBERS: Lane Morrison, Chair; Carrie Spear, Matthew Krasnow, Fritz Tegatz (departed 6:50 p.m.), Jacob Spell (arrived 4:39 p.m.).

ADMINISTRATION: Dean Bloch, Town Administrator.

OTHERS: Dick St George, Rob Mullin, Charles Russell, Dick Weed, Amy Wright, Mark Moser, Jenny Cole, Robert Mack, Alaina Murphy, Dorothy Pellett, Burlington Free Press; John Hammer, Charlotte News; and others.

ITEMS TAKEN UP:

- FY17 Budget – finalize and approve for warning
- Town Meeting Warning – approve
- Selectboard report for Town Report – approve
- Select candidates for Administrative Assistant to interview
- Determine pay-rate for recently appointed Lister

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Morrison, Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

ADJUSTMENTS TO THE AGENDA

Added:

- Thorp Barn Damage Repair
- Eagle Scout Project

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

FY17 BUDGET – FINALIZE AND APPROVE FOR WARNING

Fire and Rescue Capital Reserve Fund

Mr. Krasnow reviewed a comparison of 10 year and 20 year bonding proposals for 25 percent, 50 percent and 75 percent for the next three large capital expenditures. For example, a 50 percent-20 year bond of \$550,000 estimated purchase could be paid via \$275,000 revenue and \$275,000 in structured payments, with interest of \$13,750 per year for 20 years. A new ambulance was an exception for a capital purchase. An ambulance has an 8 year expected life and could not be bonded for 20 years. Another option is to pick a dollar amount not tied to the tax rate. Last year that number was an \$180,000 allocation. A total bond interest, page 4, is the most palatable model, said Mr. Krasnow.

Mr. Tegatz asked if a bond could be paid off early without penalty.

Mr. Morrison recommended \$180,000, or \$181,000, for budgeting purposes that would continue on an annual vote. Mr. Russell clarified that it has to be a number amount since it was in the budget.

Mr. Mack suggested putting off the truck purchase until the Fire Station was paid off and then bond for a truck. That way there would be no overlapping of bonding and less a burden on tax payers. Is there any sunset on this, asked Mr. Mack. Mr. Morrison explained that it was planning to build up a 'bank', and not for spending it now.

Mr. Tegatz said that he had done a comparison on home owner insurance costs versus fire department costs. There was a \$14 difference, which could pay for rescue service.

Mr. Mack pointed out that Charlotte didn't need new fire trucks when there were surrounding towns with fire service, such as Shelburne, Hinesburg, Vergennes and Ferrisburgh. Charlotte doesn't have hydrants or even a fire district, said Mr. Mack.

Mr. St George said that a Kennelworth commercial truck wouldn't last as long as a custom fire truck. The Seagrave is a fast attack truck that was essential. The surrounding towns fire trucks/departments were anywhere from 15-20 minutes away, said Mr. St George. Mr. Mullin explained that the Mack truck was 35 years old and not reliable. It has a hole in the water tank and has to be filled regularly. If it was not replaced there is a chance that the truck might not reach a fire, said Mr. Mullin.

Mr. St George explained that front line fire trucks are beat up after 15 years of use. The department needs a prudent replacement program. Vergennes held off replacing fire vehicles and when their pumper went down they had to do all replacements in one shot, which was an expensive proposition, said Mr. St George.

Mr. Russell asked for clarification of bonding \$625,000 at 75 percent for 20 years, page 3. If you use bonding you shouldn't accumulate more than you need to, and you shouldn't set aside more tax money then you need to, said Mr. Russell.

Mr. St George suggested that the Selectboard and Fire Department should jointly discuss equipment purchases, such as air packs.

Mr. Russell suggested setting up a debt service section and allocate one-fourth of the \$180,000 in a reserve fund versus having a capital reserve fund. Mr. Krasnow said he has not heard anyone suggest eliminating a capital reserve fund. Ellie Russell brought attention to using tax revenue as a way to save on interest payments. It is a mutual process between the Selectboard and Fire/Rescue joint committee to determine the best purchase decisions, said Mr. Krasnow.

FY16/17 Budget

There was discussion regarding total revenue of \$1,394,777 and revised expense line items.

SUGGESTIONS/CHANGES:

- Town Plan/Land Use Regulations – leave at \$750
- 3rd Lister – leave at \$1,500
- Library: Library Assistant - change \$35,632 to \$36,234 for a Saturday staff person increase
- Library: change ‘Seminars’ to ‘Professional Development’
- Recreation: Mileage – change \$150 to \$200
- Conservation: “Lewis Creek – Frogbit” changed to read “Water Quality Stewardship” (Mr. Krasnow suggested inviting the Conservation Commission to a meeting for a discussion on Water Quality Stewardship. If the funds were not spent then the money should be returned to the tax payer, suggested Mr. Krasnow)
- Donations: HOPE – left at \$500; Child Care Resources – changed from zero to \$250; American Red Cross – remains at \$1,000
- Transfer: Highway Capital Reserve Fund – funds would carry forward; Fire and Rescue Reserve Fund - \$181,346 required a tax rate calculation

Mr. Bloch noted that regarding a tax rate calculation the final Grand List amount was an unknown, and that Mary Mead said that the Selectboard should not rely on a surplus this year.

MOTION by Mr. Tegatz, seconded by Mr. Krasnow, to approve Article 4 to adopt the Selectboard’s total budget of \$3,014,063, for the fiscal year July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017, of which an anticipated sum of \$1,619,286 shall be raised by taxes and an anticipated sum of \$1,394,777 will be raised by non-tax revenues.

VOTE: 4 ayes, 1 nay (Mr. Spell); motion carried.

Mr. Tegatz suggested that it might be time to use the NEMRC report versus the spreadsheet for next year, and explore using NEMRC to calculate a tax rate for the Town Report. Mr. Spell suggested using NEMRC for Board review of the budget and print the spread sheet in the Town Report since that was what the tax payer was used to seeing. Mr. Krasnow suggested having a conversation with Mary Mead on what format to use in the Town Report.

TOWN MEETING WARNING – APPROVE

The Selectboard reviewed the draft Town Meeting Warning.

Mr. Bloch reported that the Town Attorney was consulted regarding Article 5, to authorize an annual allocation to the conservation fund. The Town Attorney said that a 10 year limit wasn’t needed. Article 5 as written wouldn’t need to be warned, it would just need an amount budgeted by the Board, said Mr. Bloch.

Article 5: Delete language “...as approved at Town Meeting...”

There was discussion regarding Article 9, Town Charter, related to the following language “...the purpose of which is to create a two-step voting process for adopting the municipal budget...”.

Mr. Weed suggested using language that was understandable and a simple yes or no vote. The proposed language was confusing. The voters vote on a Town budget at Town Meeting at a certain time period. People care about the outcome, not the purpose. The voters need to be told what the two-step budget voting process is, said Mr. Weed.

Mr. Krasnow explained that the article language was a boiler plate to adopt a municipal charter as per the Town Attorney. A letter received from Gretchen Morse expressed the same concern, said Mr. Krasnow.

Mr. Krasnow suggested language that “Shall the Town adopt a municipal charter which changes the Town’s current process of adopting an annual budget from the floor vote at Town Meeting to a...”

Ms. Spear asked that the Selectboard hold a Town Charter informational meeting within 10 days before Town Meeting, post articles on the charter on Front Porch Forum and in the Charlotte News and Charlotte Citizen. A direct mailing was a good idea, said Ms. Spear.

Following further discussion Selectboard members spoke in support of Article 9 as written.

There was discussion regarding Articles 10-15 related to Village Designation and Land Use Regulation amendments.

It was suggested that the following language should be added Articles 10-15 that the amendment “is available on the Town Website”. Article 13 was in response to comments written by Liam Murphy “...§4442, except for any amendments to Section 3.12(A)...” as a minor change.

Robert Mack suggested ending Article 14, “...after Table 2.4, Commercial/Light Industrial.”

Ms. Spear asked if the updated Town Plan would be ready for a November 2016 vote. She had questions. She would want to hold more than just two public hearings on the amendments, said Ms. Spear. Mr. Bloch replied that the Planning Commission was getting close to completing the Town Plan update.

Ms. Spear said that residents have expressed concerns regarding development conflicts and noise issues. We have wildlife protections and we need to understand the human concerns. She was not in favor of Article 15, stated Ms. Spear.

Mr. Moser said that there were significant issues with Article 14. There were people who might not have enough water now. Residents in the village area have the same concerns regarding Article 15, said Mr. Moser.

Ms. Murphy said that she was not against development. However, there should be proper testing before something is approved, not after. For example, water and traffic impacts in the Village on those already living there, said Ms. Murphy.

Mr. Tegatz pointed out that the state ground water and waste water rules supersedes any local laws. Mr. Spell said that if there was a resident with water issues and the Town gives away water rights then the Town wouldn't have a legal leg to stand on.

MOTION by Ms. Spear, seconded by Mr. Spell, to eliminate Articles 13, 14, and 15 from the Town Meeting Warning at this time, with the articles to be readdressed and reconsidered potentially at a November 2016 vote.

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Bloch explained that the blank date in the articles assumed the January 11, 2016 date when the Selectboard approved the amendments.

Ms. Spear said the motion was to eliminate the three articles from the March Town Meeting for a later date.

Ms. Spear said she didn't like the numeral "13" and suggested replacing "13" with a different number.

Mr. Tegatz said that Article 13 was a 'housekeeping' amendment and should be kept in the warning so that the different sections of the regulations were in sync with each other.

AMENDMENT to the motion by Ms. Spear, seconded by Mr. Spell, to retain Article 13 in the warning.

VOTE: 4 ayes, 1 nay (Mr. Morrison); motion carried.

MOTION by Mr. Tegatz, seconded by Ms. Spear, to approve the draft Town Meeting Warning of Articles 1-13, inserting the date "January 11, 2016" in Articles 10, 11, 12 and 13, with the following revisions

- Article 5 – delete "...as approved at Town Meeting"
- Article 13 – add "...except for any amendments to Section 3.12(A)"
- Article 9 - leave as written, pending review by the Town Attorney.

VOTE: 4 ayes, 1 nay (Mr. Spell); motion carried.

MOTION by Ms. Spear, seconded by Mr. Tegatz, to replace the numeral "13" in Article 13 with the number "14".

VOTE: 4 ayes, 1 abstention (Mr. Spell); motion carried.

SELECTBOARD REPORT FOR TOWN REPORT – APPROVE

Mr. Morrison asked Selectboard members for comments/input regarding a draft Selectboard Report for the 2016 Town Report.

SUGGESTIONS/CHANGES:

- Financial Policies: add that “the Selectboard worked with the Town Clerk and Assistant Town Clerk and are grateful for their input”
- Thank Fire Chief Chris Davis for 20 years of service and dedicate the Town Report to Chief Davis
- Thank Charlotte Town Clerk, Mary Mead, for her many years of service
- Reorder paragraphs: 1st paragraph “new spirit”, 2nd paragraph “court report” and 3rd paragraph “the Town is grateful...”
- Police Service: rewrite as “...we are working on solutions to speeding...”
- Remove “relocating town trees”
- Town Charter: rewrite as “...puts to a town vote...”, and “...a floor vote would not become affective...”
- 1st paragraph, second line from the bottom, “addressing”;
- 2nd line: insert “the new Board”; VCAM, line 2, change to “meetings”; strike “that are available.”
- Financial paragraph: add “confidence and transparency”
- Under Community Safety Committee, strike “considering speed carts and flashing lights”

SELECT CANDIDATES FOR ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT TO INTERVIEW

MOTION by Mr. Krasnow, seconded by Ms. Spear, to recess the regular meeting and enter Executive Session for the purpose of discussing personnel matters where premature knowledge might place the Town at a disadvantage, and to invite the Town Administrator to attend.

VOTE: 5 ayes; motion carried.

The Selectboard recessed the regular meeting and entered Executive Session at 6:24 p.m.

(NOTE: Mr. Tegatz departed Executive Session and left the meeting at 6:50 p.m.)

MOTION by Mr. Krasnow, seconded by Ms. Spear, to adjourn Executive Session and reconvene the regular meeting.

VOTE: 4 ayes, 1 absent (Mr. Tegatz); motion carried.

Executive Session was adjourned and the regular meeting was reconvened at 6:59 p.m.

Mr. Morrison reported that no action was taken. The Selectboard reviewed applications for the Administrative Assistant position and candidate interviews would be scheduled.

DETERMINE PAY-RATE FOR RECENTLY APPOINTED LISTER

The Selectboard members spoke in favor of a Step 1 pay rate of \$14.39 per hour for the newly appointed Lister, Britney Tenney.

EAGLE SCOUT BIKE RACK PROJECT

MOTION by Mr. Krasnow, seconded by Mr. Spell, to authorize Fritz Tegatz to approve a design and construction proposal for a bike rack by Andrew Gay as an Eagle Scout project.

VOTE: 4 ayes, 1 absent (Mr. Tegatz); motion carried.

THORP BARN REPAIR PROPOSAL

MOTION by Mr. Krasnow, seconded by Ms. Spear, to authorize Jenny Cole, Charlotte Park and Wildlife Refuge Oversight Committee member, to approve a repair of the Thorp Barn by Ward Preston for an amount not to exceed \$930.

VOTE: 4 ayes, 1 absent (Mr. Tegatz); motion carried.

MINUTES: December 15, December 16, December 21, 2015 and January 5, 2016

MOTION by Mr. Krasnow, seconded by Ms. Spear, to approve the Charlotte Selectboard minutes of 12/15/2015 as written.

VOTE: 3 ayes, 1 abstention (Mr. Spell), 1 absent (Mr. Tegatz); motion carried.

MOTION by Mr. Krasnow, seconded by Ms. Spear, to approve the Charlotte Selectboard minutes of 12/16/2015 as written, with the following correction to the Motion, page 2:

- **Add a 3rd bullet: Zoning Administrator at 25 hours per week.**
- **Add a 4th bullet: Wage to be determined by the Selectboard using the Palmer Analysis.**

VOTE: 3 ayes, 1 abstention (Mr. Spell), 1 absent (Mr. Tegatz); motion carried.

MOTION by Mr. Krasnow, seconded by Ms. Spear, to approve the Charlotte Selectboard minutes of 12/21/2015 as written.

VOTE: 4 ayes, 1 absent (Mr. Tegatz); motion carried.

MOTION by Mr. Krasnow, seconded by Ms. Spear, to approve the Charlotte Selectboard minutes of 01/05/2016 as written.

VOTE: 4 ayes, 1 absent (Mr. Tegatz); motion carried.

SELECTBOARD UPDATES

Mr. Krasnow reported that a Charlotte Safety Committee (CSC) member has resigned. The Selectboard should discuss the future of the committee at the next Selectboard meeting.

Staff to add a CSC discussion to the next Selectboard agenda.

Mr. Krasnow reported that the Charlotte Park and Wildlife Refuge committee has suggested updating a 1999 Park Management Plan in collaboration with the Selectboard. The committee would present recommendations in April, 2016, said Mr. Krasnow. Mr. Mack pointed out that agricultural interests were not represented on the Park Committee.

Staff to reaffirm the proposed Town Meeting Warning articles and language with the Town Attorney.

Next Selectboard meeting: 01/25/2016.

APPROVE WARRANTS TO PAY BILLS

The Selectboard signed warrants to pay bills.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Ms. Spear, seconded by Mr. Krasnow, to adjourn the meeting.

VOTE: 4 ayes, 1 absent (Mr. Tegatz); motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted, Kathlyn L. Furr, Recording Secretary.